

Atmashakti to YOU

SHARED RESOURCES, GROUND KNOWLEDGE



A Season of Momentum, Memory, and Movement



Dear Friends,

Between April and August, something remarkable stirred across our regions. It was not just the unfolding of programs, but the steady rhythm of people in motion.

In Maharashtra, a farmer broke free from the cycle of dependency by sowing a second crop on land once left barren. In a URMI Bingo circle, a tribal woman traced her journey from silence to leadership, inspiring others to step forward. In Mayurbhanj, a young Sarpanch took her first confident steps into digital governance, navigating policy and accountability through the small screen of a smartphone.

These are not isolated events; they are glimpses of a deeper transformation that begins with trust and grows through collective effort.

This quarter also brought milestones that remind us how vision turns into action. The Brown to Green campaign brought farmers together to reclaim fallow

lands and reimagine livelihoods. Through the Indigenous Yatra, food traditions and knowledge systems were not only celebrated but positioned at the heart of resilience and sustainability. Across Odisha's tribal districts, children's aspirations began reshaping debates on what education should truly mean in their lives. And on global platforms, grassroots voices resonated, ensuring that local wisdom continues to inform international dialogues.

What binds these diverse moments together is not the scale of the projects, but the spirit that drives them, the courage of people who refuse to be defined by scarcity, the creativity of leaders who see possibility where others see limits, and the solidarity of networks that keep momentum alive.

At Atmashakti, we believe transformation is not measured only in numbers, but in the echoes of courage, the persistence of memory, and the collective steps of communities moving forward together.

With gratitude and hope,

Ruchi Kashyap

Ruchi Kashyap

On behalf of the Atmashakti Team



From Brown to Green: Second Crop Movement Grows Roots

“

As a small farmer, taking new decisions is risky. Motivated by free seeds and guided by our Sangathan, I grew a second crop on fallow land. Without irrigation, residual soil moisture worked its magic, and I harvested ten times the green gram I sowed. This extra income supported my daughter's education, and I feel proud of the decision I made.

- Kirtan Kashyap

Village Kanchda, Ringini, Janigir Champa, Chhattisgarh

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“

Due to financial issues, we always suffered as my husband was the only earning person in our family. Sometimes he would feel helpless due to his limited education and knowledge. But thanks to Shramajeebi Sangathan for showing us the way through second cropping. We are always grateful.

- Hiramati Kabasi

Village Dangarabata, Tandiki, Malkangiri, Odisha

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These are not just echoes, but expressions of hopes finally taking root. Hopes that lay dormant for generations as fields lay fallow after the paddy harvest, silent and unused. Today, a quiet revolution is stirring across India's rice-fallow lands. With free seeds, community solidarity, and a leap of faith, small farmers are transforming empty fields into harvests of hope, income, and resilience.

In India, farming is closely tied to the monsoon or reliable irrigation. Yet, **over 19.6 million hectares of land lie fallow** and much of it in tribal-dominated regions. These lands are mostly owned by small and marginal farmers, many with less than 2 acres. Limited irrigation, restricted access to social security schemes, and isolation from urban centers often force young people to migrate to nearby towns and cities, leaving behind villages populated mostly by the elderly. Life in these communities is pared down to the essentials, often dictated by the long wait for the monsoon, turning

once-thriving villages into near-ghost settlements.

“Brown to Green Campaign”- A Game Changer

The challenge of unused fertile land and the struggles of marginalized farmers inspired us to act. During the Covid-19 pandemic, while the government focused on saving lives, communities had to take charge of their own futures. Just as we helped one lakh tribal and Dalit children continue their education despite isolation, we saw that small support could unlock huge potential in farming too. Our education work showed that sustainable change happens when communities lead. By leveraging government resources and engaging stakeholders, we can transform both policies and rural life.

Atmashakti Trust put this philosophy into action through the flagship Brown to Green campaign, using the government's Rice-Fallow Management Schemes to provide free seeds to marginal farmers in

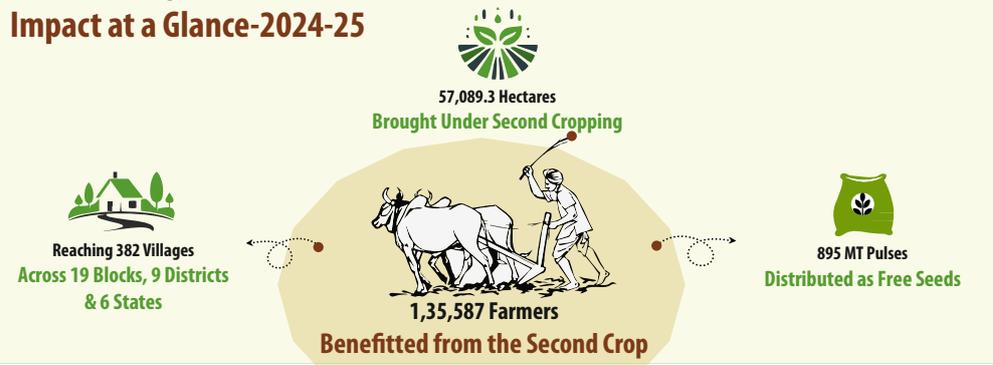
Odisha. We mobilized one lakh farmers to grow a second crop on fallow land. With access to seeds and government support, households gained an extra Rs. 15,000 on average and improved nutrition for children, half of whom had been malnourished.

For farmers like Madanabati Pradhan from Kandhamal, the impact is personal and tangible: *“I never thought I could earn this much from my small land. With free seeds from the government and encouragement from the Sangathan, I not only secured my family's needs and improved our nutrition, but also inspired others in my village to try the same.”*

The increased yield and confidence of farmers result from the continuous support of **Atmashakti and two state level collectives, Odisha Shramajeebee Manch (OSM) and Mahila Shramajeebee Manch Odisha (MSMO)** at the village level. They map potential farmers, mobilize

Seeds of Change:

Impact at a Glance-2024-25



them for second crop cultivation, ensure timely access to seeds, provide guidance on seed selection and natural farming methods, and encourage women farmers to take the lead, proving to be a true game changer.

With successful implementation in Odisha for three consecutive years, the organization in collaboration with National Consortium to Combat Malnutrition (NCCM) expanded the campaign to five more states such as Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra and is targeting to reach one million farmers and revitalizing 400,000 hectares of fallow land within the next five years.

Impact Across States

So far, 4,55,911 marginal farmers in 16 tribal and Dalit-dominated districts of Odisha have benefited from free pulse seeds and second-crop cultivation, bringing new hope to marginal farming families. After the Kharif harvest, we put our idea to the test in five states such as Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, reaching 2,444 farmers. Atmashakti Trust provided

seeds to 40% of them, while the rest came through government and NGO channels. Despite delays in seed supply, the outcome was inspiring: farmers harvested yields nearly six times higher than their initial input.

For many, it was the first time pulses had grown on their fields. Families who once bought dal from the market now harvest it at home, while surplus produce brings much-needed income. This initiative has turned once-barren lands into sources of **food security, dignity, and hope** for marginal farmers.

Farmers' Gratitude: From Fields to Policymakers



Postcards carrying women farmers' words of gratitude to the government for free seed distribution

In a simple yet powerful gesture, farmers are using postcards and video messages to make their voices heard by policymakers. Through the Brown to Green initiative, they are expressing gratitude to the government for the free seeds that turned once-fallow lands into bountiful pulse fields. Their letters have reached key officials, including Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief

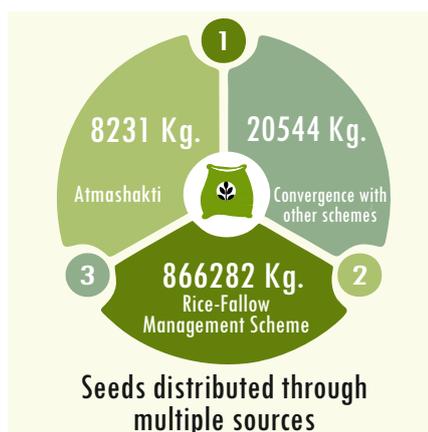
Ministers, Ministers of Agriculture, and Principal Secretaries in the targeted states. What began as one thank-you note has grown into many voices, with farmers asking for continued support so more land—and more lives—can grow and prosper.

Looking ahead, farmers are clear about what they need to make the second crop movement even more successful. They want timely access to seeds, better market opportunities to sell their produce, and indigenous, climate-resilient seed varieties to sustain their livelihoods. In response, Atmashakti Trust plans to scale up free seed distribution and support second-crop cultivation across more villages and states, ensuring that more farmers can turn their fallow lands into sources of food, income, and hope.

Conclusion

The Brown to Green initiative shows that real change happens when farmers, local sangathans,

and the government work together. **By combining community action, government support, and sustainable farming practices, fallow lands can be transformed into productive fields, improving livelihoods, nutrition, and hope for marginal farmers. Together, these collective efforts are proving to be a true game changer for rural India.** ■





Games of Change: Women Reclaiming Strength and Space

How Games are Igniting Dialogue, Leadership, and Community Action in Odisha's Villages

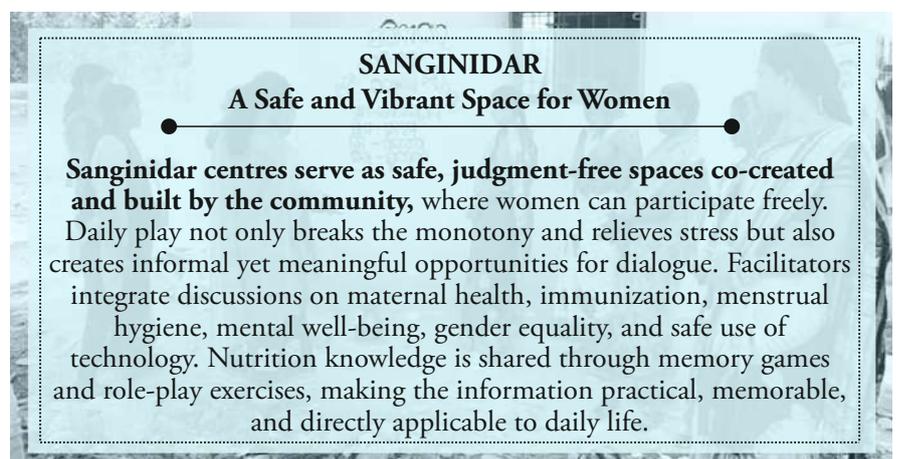
In villages, women are gathering in vibrant SANGINIDAR centres, not just to play, but to reclaim their voices and agency. What begins with laughter, cheers, and movement soon transforms into moments of learning, reflection, and dialogue. Here, games become more than relaxation; they create safe, welcoming spaces where women can pause from daily routines, share experiences, and support one another. As part of our community engagement, traditional games have been reintroduced not only as a source of joy but also as a powerful medium for self-discovery and empowerment. Through these activities, women explore their inner strengths, practice decision-making, and open conversations on issues of health, nutrition, safety, and leadership, all while enjoying the simple joy of play.

Games as a Pathway to Inner Strength and Transformation

The rhythm of traditional games like Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Chilolai, Phitu, Satgadi, and China Goti has returned to village grounds, while new games like Bingo have added fresh excitement. But these aren't just games, they are pathways to confidence and collective strength. Each round sparks conversations on health, nutrition, education, equality, and

rights. As women take turns setting rules, mediating disputes, and keeping score, they are quietly honing leadership, decision-making, and teamwork, all within a safe, joyful space of support.

While the games teach skills and spark learning, their real impact is reflected in the voices of the women themselves, stories that show how play has opened doors to confidence, reflection,



leadership, and collective strength.

Recognizing her own inner conflicts through engagement, Pushpa Baa of Bijadhi Village shared, *“Through the game, I found a safe space to express my thoughts and feelings. It helped me pause, reflect, and discuss challenges with other women, building confidence and support.”*

For Mamata Bagh from Sudarsanpur village, stepping out of the home brought a sense of empowerment. She said, *“Earlier, I stayed confined at home. Joining the community games made me laugh, interact, and learn about women’s rights and self-care. Now, I feel happier, more confident, and healthier, both mentally and physically.”*

Pushpa Lata Dhanwar emphasized the importance of collective strength for women who often have little say in family decisions: together, we forget our fears. The unity brings a strength I never knew I had,” she added.

Building on the confidence gained through games, women



A woman member inaugurates the Sanginidar Centre, symbolizing community leadership and empowerment

participate in health and community activities. The program held 36 health camps, 16 Village Health Days, 48 hemoglobin tests, and home visits, reaching 64 Anganwadi Centres. Local leaders, health workers, and officials joined hands to maximize impact.

Cultural activities bring learning and leadership to life. Dance, song, art, creative games, and yoga help women and adolescents engage, build confidence, and grow stronger together. During World Menstrual Hygiene Day, 834 girls across 21 villages joined games and awareness sessions, breaking taboos and promoting holistic well-being.

Early Impact: Co-Creating Spaces of Strength

Spaces Built Together:

Sanginidar Centres are not “delivered” to the community; they are co-created.

Playgrounds of Trust: A safe circle where women heal together

Reclaiming Public Spaces:

Where women claim space beyond home

From Isolation to Collective Identity:

Once scattered, now a circle of women co-owning change

Observed changes: Women attending meetings, accessing schemes, participating in governance, and speaking up on sensitive issues.

Conclusion

Traditional games are instruments of empowerment. Women are stepping out of isolation, finding confidence in their voices, and discovering the strength of collective action. From improving nutrition and health awareness to practicing leadership and strengthening community bonds, these simple games are unlocking courage, inspiring dialogue, and proving that meaningful change begins when women stand together. ■

An infographic with a background image of a woman blowing a bubble with gum. The title 'EARLY IMPACT' is at the top. Below it are four text boxes arranged in a 2x2 grid, each with a title and a description.

SPACES BUILT TOGETHER:	PLAYGROUNDS OF TRUST:
26 Sanginidar Centres are not delivered; they are co-created with community	A safe circle where women heal together
RECLAIMING PUBLIC SPACES:	FROM ISOLATION TO COLLECTIVE IDENTITY:
Where women claim space beyond home	Women dreaming, planning, acting together



From Shadows to Spotlight – Chanda Devi’s Rise Through Ufan Kala Manch

“Ufan Kala Manch gave me the wings to fly and the courage to dream beyond my circumstances. I am no longer trapped by the weight of my past or the limits others placed on me. Today, I stand tall, not just as someone who broke free, but as a voice that inspires others to rise, reclaim their strength, and create their own paths of freedom.”

- Chanda Devi, Member of Ufan Kala Manch, Sonbhadra

In the deeply patriarchal villages of Sonbhadra district, Uttar Pradesh, opportunities for girls to voice their opinions or pursue education are severely limited. Social norms often confine women to household roles, while early marriages, domestic violence, and systemic inequality curtail personal growth.

Chanda Devi’s life reflects these harsh realities. Married at just 14 while still in school, she faced domestic abuse, societal stigma, and the burden of raising three children. Her husband’s untimely death left her branded a **“witch”** by her in-laws, intensifying her social isolation and financial insecurity. Her story is not an exception but a mirror of the struggles faced by many women in the region. It is against this backdrop of silence and suppression that a new wave of change began to take root.

Sonbhadra is a rural, tribal region where cultural traditions are strong,

and gender roles are rigid. In this challenging environment, Ufan Kala Manch, a youth-led cultural and leadership platform by Atmashakti Trust, emerged as a vehicle for change. Through street theatre, folk songs, and storytelling, it empowers youth, especially girls, to express themselves, build confidence, and address social issues in their communities.



Chandadevi, before joining the theatre journey

Finding Her Voice Through Theatre

Chanda’s first encounter with Ufan Kala Manch was transformative. Attending a workshop organized by the initiative, she hesitated at first, nervous to speak or perform. The sessions focused on theatre, storytelling, and folk art as tools for self-expression.

Through guided exercises, Chanda gradually overcame her fear. She learned how to convey emotions, narrate stories, and communicate pressing social issues with authenticity. The art of performance became a medium through which she could share her experiences, confront her fears, and discover a new voice.

“Before joining the Kala Manch, I didn’t even know my rights and never imagined I could speak in front of people. Today, I perform and engage youth for social change, and it feels truly heartwarming,” she shares.



Chanda takes the stage, using drama to spark dialogue on violence against women in her community

Stepping into Leadership

A bootcamp organized by Ufan Kala Manch marked a defining moment in Chanda's journey. Here, she received mentorship on public speaking, community mobilisation, and cultural performance.

For the first time, Chanda performed in front of her peers, sharing her personal struggles and advocating for girls' education and women's rights. The applause, encouragement from mentors, and positive feedback from fellow participants ignited a newfound confidence. This experience empowered her to step into leadership and hold her role as a change-maker in her village.

"I never imagined someone from our village could stand up and speak with such courage. Chanda's leadership is inspiring young men and women alike to rethink what is possible," said Naresh, a youth from Chanda's village.

Leading the Change – Active in the Community

With new skills and confidence, Chanda began leading street plays, singing folk songs, and organizing community dialogues on girls' education, women's empowerment, domestic violence, social discrimination, and access to welfare schemes such as housing, pensions, ration cards, and MGNREGA.

Through her cultural engagement, Chanda inspired villagers to rethink traditional norms and encouraged young women to find their own voices. Chanda's efforts have earned widespread recognition, with community leaders admiring her courage and leadership, fellow villagers viewing her as a symbol of hope and change, and her family respecting her determination and resilience, embracing her role as a leader both at home and in the community.

"We have seen Chanda face struggles and rise above them. Today, she is not only a leader in the village but also an inspiration to her family and everyone around her," said Pushkar, Chanda's uncle.

The Wings of Change

Today, Chanda's aspirations reflect her strengthened agency as she works to expand Ufan Kala Manch activities to more villages in Sonbhadra, mentor young women to use cultural expression for social change, and ensure her children receive the education she once dreamed of.

Chanda sums up her journey: ***"Ufan Kala Manch gave me the wings to fly. I am no longer trapped by my past. Now, I inspire others to break free too."***

Conclusion

Chanda Devi's journey from silence to self-expression is not just her own story but a reflection of what becomes possible when marginalized women are given platforms to lead. From being silenced by social stigma to stepping onto village stages with courage, she has shown how art, culture, and collective support can ignite transformation.

Her rise through Ufan Kala Manch is proof that when women break free from barriers, entire communities begin to shift. Chanda is no longer just a survivor of her circumstances, she is a leader, a mentor, and a voice of change. ***Her story reminds us that resilience is born not only from enduring hardship but from daring to dream beyond it, lighting the way for many others to follow.*** ■

HEARTH SUMMIT

JUNE 17-20 2025

#HEARTHSSUMMIT



Wisdom Without Borders: Indigenous Knowledge Driving Global Action

From healing practices to cultural wisdom, every global engagement affirms that indigenous communities' voices carry universal relevance

In India's tribal heartlands, centuries-old ecological knowledge, cultural traditions, and community wisdom continue to prosper. Initiatives like the Indigenous Yatra help communities document oral histories, traditional medicine, and seed varieties, while nurturing youth leadership and strengthening cultural revival. *"The Indigenous Yatra helps us reconnect with our roots, protect our traditions, and pass on our wisdom to future generations,"* says **Hari Ram Dubey**, elder of the Gond Tribe in Madhya Pradesh. For young changemakers like Balwant from the Baiga community, creating a village Biodiversity Register has

strengthened community identity and ensured their knowledge is recognized.

Cultural Commons Toolkit (CCT)

Atmashakti Trust amplifies these local efforts through the Cultural Commons Toolkit (CCT), a participatory framework that helps communities reclaim, document, and share cultural assets, governance practices, and knowledge systems. The toolkit serves as a practical guide for communities to map cultural resources, assert rights over heritage, and build governance capacity, while also creating frameworks for

collaboration with researchers, writers, and funders.

Over the past six months, Atmashakti has developed a foundational concept note and engaged with key stakeholders to ensure that the toolkit is culturally grounded and community-led. The next phase focuses on co-designing digital storytelling strategies, enabling communities to narrate their knowledge in ways that resonate globally. By connecting Indigenous knowledge with global networks, the CCT positions cultural preservation not just as heritage protection but as a living,

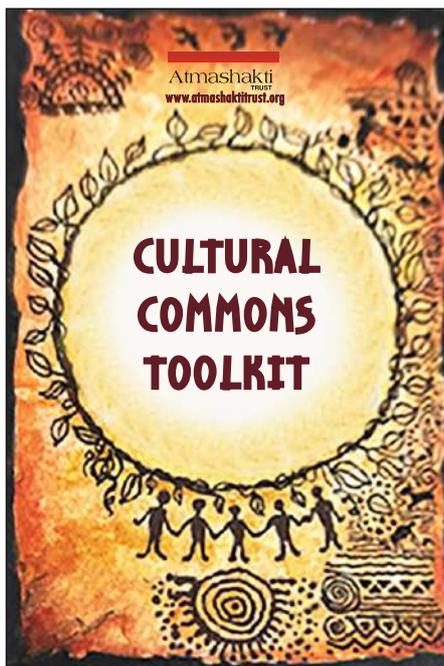
evolving resource that informs sustainable development, social innovation, and wellbeing worldwide.

Social Innovation Journal (SIJ)

Globally, Atmashakti's work resonates through platforms such as the HEARTH Summit in Slovenia, the Indigenous Global Outreach, and international collaborations like the Social Innovation Journal (SIJ). The Trust supported a Special Edition on enterprise development, finalizing nine articles and organizing a "Meet the Authors" event that showcased grassroots innovators to global audiences. The edition is scheduled for worldwide publication and dissemination.

Towards Unity for Health (TUFH)

In the field of health, Atmashakti has furthered its advocacy through Towards Unity for Health (TUFH),



A toolkit safeguarding Indigenous knowledge, rights, and governance

providing recommendations on integrating Indigenous healing practices and enhancing community-based health access. A clinical guideline brief and paper are being

prepared for the TUFH 2025 conference, highlighting the global relevance of culturally grounded health practices and their role in resilient health systems. Strengthening its international presence, Atmashakti has also joined new networks like WHEN (Wellbeing Higher Education Network), promoting wellbeing in social change education, and Catalyst Now, a global movement of social innovators advancing the SDGs. These affiliations highlight the growing global recognition of the organization's initiatives, from cultural preservation to community wellbeing.

From the heart of tribal villages to the halls of international forums, this journey demonstrates that local wisdom, when nurtured and amplified, can transform communities and lay the foundation for a just, resilient, and sustainable world. ■

Model Villages, Bioregions of Hope

UPCOMING



Once flourishing fields now struggle with shrinking yields, disappearing pollinators, and erratic weather, signs of ecosystems under stress. Yet, among these challenges, villages are showing the way forward. By treating each model village as a center of resilience and extending sustainable practices across the surrounding bioregion, communities are reweaving the fabric of nature and livelihoods.

These bioregions are becoming living laboratories where traditional wisdom blends with modern innovation, securing food, water, and dignity for people while restoring balance to the land.

This is the story of how communities, as guardians, are reclaiming landscapes and shaping a future of resilience.



Turning Learning Gaps into Learning Gains

In Odisha's classrooms, the shadow of the pandemic still lingers. As children step into Grade VI, too many carry weak foundations in reading, writing, and numeracy. The **ASER 2024 report** sounds the alarm: nearly 60% of Class V students in government schools can manage only a Class II text.

To tackle this learning gap, Atmashakti Trust, in collaboration with Pratham Education Foundation, launched CAMaL Ka Camp (Combined Activities for Maximized Learning), a six-week summer program designed to reignite curiosity and strengthen foundational skills among students of Classes 4–6.

A Camp to Bridge the Learning Gaps

Aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), CAMaL Ka Camp transforms classrooms into

spaces of joy and discovery. Songs, games, and storytelling replace rote memorization, making learning engaging and confidence-building. This journey unfolds in many forms:

- Stepping Into Learning – Children arrive at the camp, curious and excited to explore.
- Hands-On Learning in Motion – Reading, discussing, and exploring together.
- Hands-On and Heart-Full – Collaboration through colors, stories, and play.
- Facilitating Curiosity and Confidence – Empowering children to ask, think, and grow.
- Joy in Every Step – Learning through laughter and participation.
- Celebrating Achievements Together – Marking milestones at the end of camp.



Scale and Reach

- 5,047 learning centers across 2,884 villages, 98 blocks, and 17 districts
- 6,936 trained youth volunteers from local communities
- 55,147 children participated and received specially designed booklets

Learning Focus

- Phonetics & Literacy – Storytelling and phonetic exercises to improve reading
- Numeracy & Games – Math activities to build problem-solving skills
- Curiosity-driven Learning – Discussions and peer learning to spark imagination

By organizing the camp during summer holidays, Atmashakti ensured children not only avoided learning loss but also built stronger educational foundations. The program's community-driven design — involving parents, teachers, youth, and local authorities — has made it a true movement for change.

“This effort to make foundational learning accessible through engaging methods is commendable. Programs like this can be a key part of our education reform efforts and pave the way for a brighter future for our children.”

— Head Master, Government Upper Primary School, Gadaiguda, Malkangiri

With CAMaL Ka Camp, Atmashakti Trust has shown how joyful, community-based learning can help children leap forward, turning one of Odisha's greatest education challenges into an opportunity for transformation.

UPCOMING



ATMASHAKTI ACADEMY

A COMMUNITY-FIRST LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

Imagine a space where Indigenous knowledge, grassroots insights, and visionary leadership come together to transform communities and inspire the world. Atmashakti Academy is that space, a community-first learning platform for youth leaders, women changemakers, and development practitioners ready to tackle India's and the world's most pressing challenges.

DISCOVER THE ACADEMY:

Lead & Learn: Fellowships, bootcamps, and mentorships that turn ideas into action.

Authentic & Grounded: Co-created curriculum by tribal and Dalit leaders, blending storytelling, policy advocacy, and Indigenous wisdom.

Global Reach: Connect local insights to international networks, immersive programs, and policy forums.

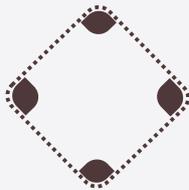
Knowledge in Action: Access digital learning, toolkits, oral histories, comics, and a multi-lingual Indigenous knowledge archive.

Revive & Inspire: Programs that preserve culture, strengthen identity, and create sustainable solutions.

CURRICULUM FEATURES

Tribe-Preneurship

Fellows =
Community
Knowledge
Bearer



Decolonized
Learning
Frameworks

SDGs and
Constitutional literacy

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Atmashakti Trust acknowledges the contributions of its team members from the ground who cover 'Stories of Change'.

Atmashakti
TRUST

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Atmashakti, meaning "**power of the soul**," reflects our belief that the strength of a community lies in its collective spirit. Registered in 1995 and actively working since 2009, we've been channeling this inner power to unite and empower marginalized communities, with a focus on reaching 10% of the rural poor, especially among Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. As a catalyst for change, we build/facilitate community's agency within these communities, enabling them to assert their rights, influence policy, and ensure their voices shape inclusive development. Through collective action and shared agency, Atmashakti transforms grassroots strength into powerful, transformative change.

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